

May 2024



WILL MICKEY MOUSE GO ON STRIKE? The workers who play characters like Goofy and Mickey Mouse and cheer and dance in the parades at Disneyland have taken a step forward in their push to unionize with Actors' Equity. The group of organizers, which is seeking to represent 1,700 employees, filed a petition for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board.



ANIMATION FINALS 2024 Thurs.. May 23rd at 5:30pm in Coppola Theater, Fine Arts 101, *free*, public invited

FILM FINALS is Thursday May 16th at 6:30pm, McKenna Theater in the

Creative Arts Building. \$15 public invited.

MORE PEOPLE SHARE THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT ELI NOYES

Lynn Smith, writer, director, independent animator, wrote “This is very sad news! I remember when Eli was the TA at the time I was taking the animation course at Harvard. *Clay or the Origin of Species* had already been out in the world. I and all those in our small animation circle in Cambridge so admired his work, his approach, and the electric spirit behind that approach. It seemed evident that Eli’s choice to animate directly, and the focus required, had infused his work with a special energy that was there for all to see. Truly inspiring!”

Lee Marrs said, “I storyboarded for Eli back in the day. He was a serious but funny fellow. Kind as well. Sorry to see him gone.”

Peter Lord, a founder of Aardman Animations, the English studio that used clay in the production of the Wallace and Gromit films, *Chicken Run* and other popular animated features, recalled in an interview seeing *Clay or the Origin of Species* on British television when he was getting started as a filmmaker. “If I hadn’t seen this film, I swear I would have never gotten started in stop-motion animation. Seeing clay brought to life in that way was a true revelation. It’s really to do with the material. It is quite primitive, but full of life and invention.”

SEE ELI’S NICK AT NIGHT ID’S Eli was known for his sense of fun and silliness. Here are 14 of his ID’s: [https://www.google.com/search?](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=eli+noyes#fpstate=ive&jp=1&vld=cid:3c2eabf0,vid:JIo_zV59X_E,st:0)

[client=firefox-b-1-](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=eli+noyes#fpstate=ive&jp=1&vld=cid:3c2eabf0,vid:JIo_zV59X_E,st:0)

[d&q=eli+noyes#fpstate=ive&jp=1&vld=cid:3c2eabf0,vid:JIo_zV59X_E,st:0](https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=eli+noyes#fpstate=ive&jp=1&vld=cid:3c2eabf0,vid:JIo_zV59X_E,st:0)



Bober Iger (left) and Nelson Peltz

DISNEY DECLARES VICTORY IN PROXY FIGHT - NELSON PELTZ FAILS TO WIN A BOARD SEAT AROUND \$70 MILLION WAS SPENT ON THE BATTLE!

Peltz, who controls about \$3.5 billion in Disney stock, was seeking to oust Disney board members Maria Elena Lagomasino and Michael Froman. He didn't succeed, but it was an expensive win. The Disney Company spent an estimated \$40 million on their campaign to defeat Peltz. Disney says that all of its nominees were elected by shareholders, rebuffing the activist investor Nelson Peltz, who ran major campaign to put himself and former Disney CFO Jay Rasulo on the company's board. They spent over \$30 million on that attempt.

A source says that Iger secured 94 percent of the vote for his board seat. Lagomasino beat Peltz by a margin of about two to one, and Rasulo lost his vote by a margin of five to one.

Disney has more retail shareholders* than most public companies, which is why the campaign was so public. (*A retail shareholder is non-professional buyer.)

A source says that retail shareholders voted by a margin of about 75 percent to 25 percent to support Disney's board picks. In comments after the voting closed, Iger said that he wanted to "take a moment to thank our shareholders for your trust and confidence in the Disney board

and management and the ambitious strategy we're implementing across our businesses to build for the future."

Over the last six months, Disney's stock went up approximately 50%. It was one of the Dow Jones Industrial Average's best performer year-to-date.

IGER COMMENTS THAT THE DISNEY PRODUCT NEEDS TO HAVE A BROAD APPEAL

In an interview on CNBC he said, "we're trying to reach a very, very diverse audience. And on one hand in order to do that, what you do, the stories you tell, have to really reflect the audience that you're trying to reach, but that audience because they are so diverse, really, first and foremost, they want to be entertained, and sometimes they can't be turned off by certain things. And we just have to be more sensitive to the interest of a broad audience. It's not easy, you know, so that we can't please everybody all the time, right?"

IGER PAINTS A POSITIVE FUTURE FOR DISNY He said it is, "Only just the beginning" as he revealed concept art for their proposed *Avatar* land in California's Disneyland at the company's shareholder's webcast in April. The art shows an outdoor lake with guests standing at the shoreline, peppered with boats and a large waterfall. Fictional Pandora creatures surround the humans, and tall outcropping of rocks frame the lake in a scene emblematic of the worlds created by writer-director James Cameron.

Disney has also dropped a first-look at the live-action film *Mufasa: The Lion King*. Director Barry Jenkins introduced the teaser trailer for the film, and it received a resounding round of applause from the Vegas crowd for its stunning visuals and tone. Mufasa is a music-infused origin story that is a follow-up to Jon Favreau's 2019 photorealistic movie *The Lion King*, which in turn was based on the 1994 Disney animated classic.

COMING SOON FROM PARAMOUNT Paramount's animated *The Smurfs Movie* is set to open Feb. 14, 2025. Nick Offerman, Natasha Lyonne and Dan Levy are among the big names joining the voice cast for the film. Paramount is also working on *Paw Patrol 3*, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem 2*, *The Spongebob Movie*:

Search for Squarepants and Aang: The Last Airbender.



DID NETFLIX LAY A ROTTEN EGG? Netflix's '*Good Times*' is a 10-episode reboot of with a Black family in the Chicago projects. It is based on a previous series and is getting lousy reviews. Critics called it dated and humorless. A pan in the *Hollywood Reporter* said, 'It is not *Good Times*... viewers who grew up with a special place in their hearts for *Good Times*, a series that redefined the parameters of what the Black family could be on TV, will probably struggle to make it through even the first episode. And for good reason. “

The HuffPost headline was, *The 'Good Times' Reboot Is Absolutely*

Terrible. *The Root* said, *Netflix's Good Times' Reboot is Flaming Stereotype-Ridden Trash. Its White Creators Are To Blame.*”

Rotten Tomatoes gives it a **13** from the critics and a **33** from the public.



THE TOP TWO BOX OFFICE CHAMPS IN CHINA Hayao Miyazaki's Oscar-winning *The Boy and the Heron* is breaking records at China's box office. The Studio Ghibli hit opened in China on a Wednesday and soared to \$13.7m. The film then set a new record on

Thursday for the biggest single-day performance ever by a non-Chinese animated film, earning \$23.7m. *The Boy and the Heron* is expected to earn over \$105m in China, which will make it Miyazaki's highest-grossing film in the country.

Legendary Entertainment and Warner Bros.' *Godzilla vs. Kong: The New Empire* continued stomping its way to strong earnings. In mid-April the tentpole had taken in \$110.3 million and its projected to gross in China may go as high as \$130 million. The film's global cume is \$436.6 million in mid-April. A sequel is planned.

CANNES TO HONOR STUDIO GHIBLI Studio Ghibli will receive an honorary Palme d'Or at Cannes this year.



Once upon a time cartoon were just silly, funny and sometimes goofy entertainment...



MORE DREAMWORKS ANIMATION EMPLOYEES VOTE TO JOIN THE UNION DreamWorks production workers are joining their artist and technician colleagues in being represented by the

Animation Guild and their editor colleagues are represented by the Motion Picture Editors Guild. The newly unionized members include production assistants, production coordinators, post production supervisors and post production assistants. Job security was a major issue as recent announcements by the company of policy changes, like increased outsourcing and no longer allowing most remote work for production staff, resulted in a sense of urgency.

In an election with the National Labor Relations Board, 94 production workers who work on television and feature films voted to join the two IATSE Locals, while 41 voted against unionization. Of the 160 workers who are now unionized with IATSE as a result of the vote, about a dozen will join the Motion Picture Editors Guild (Local 700) because they work in postproduction, while other production staffers, whose roles align more with artists, technical directors and writers, will join the Animation Guild (Local 839). The counting of ballots took place on March 26. *Kung Fu Panda 4* had a worldwide gross of \$455 million as of mid-April.



SEE A CLIP FROM 'ABSTRONIC,' 1952, BY MARY ELLEN BUTTE. SHE WAS A PIONEER OF VISUAL MUSIC AND ELECTRONIC ART Mary Ellen Bute produced 14 short abstract animations between the 1934 and 1953. She worked in New York City with cinematographer Theodore Nemeth, an expert in animation and special effects. They married in 1940. Six of her shorts premiered on the huge screen of the Radio City Music Hall.

"I wanted to manipulate light to produce visual compositions in time continuity much as a musician manipulates sound to produce music. It was particularly while I listened to music that I felt an

overwhelming urge to translate my reactions and ideas into visual form that would have the ordered sequence of music." - Mary Ellen Bute

(1954) See her *Abstronic*, 1952, <https://vimeo.com/217727679>

Spook Sport, 1940, <https://dailypsychedellicvideo.com/2015/10/24/spook-sport-1940-mary-ellen-bute/>

Tarantella, 1940, <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=mary+ellen+bute#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:58f3fe5b,vid:czDsy8BYP1M,st:0>

Her *Symphony Number Four: Escape*, 1936 minutes, color: <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=mary+ellen+bute>



TRINA ROBBINS WAS AN ARTIST, PROLIFIC WRITER AND A WONDERFUL PERSON Wikipedika says, “Trina Robbins was “an American cartoonist. She was an early participant in the

underground comix movement, and one of the first women in the movement. She co-produced the 1970 underground comic *It Ain't Me, Babe*, which was the first comic book entirely created by women.”

That is true, but that was just one of her accomplishments. The former underground cartoonist, became a comics and illustrator herstorian. Trina Robbins created a successful career writing graphic novels, comics, and books for almost half a century. Her subjects have ranged from Wonder Woman and The Powerpuff Girls to her own teenage superheroine, Go Girl! and from women cartoonists and superheroines to women who kill. She's won an Inkpot Award and was inducted in the Will Eisner Hall of Fame at the San Diego Comic-Con. She lived in a 100+-year-old house in San Francisco with her cats, shoes, and dust bunnies. She was always an interesting person to talk to. A short TV interview is posted at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-rslrwecqe>

- **MARK FIORE VISIT'S DONALD AND GETS HIS OPINION**

ABOUT HIS JURY Is it funny or just gross? https://markfiore.substack.com/p/new-cartoon-da-boss-selects-his-jury?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email#media-2b6caa6b-a9cc-4ad8-9676-d8e4e221f875

- **CARTOON BREW HAS AN EXCELLENT TRIBUTE TO BOBO**

CANNON It has links to his work with Bugs Bunny Droopy, a strange looking SNAFU and more. [https://www.cartoonbrew.com/animators-spotlight/animators-spotlight-bobe-cannon-239528.html](https://www.cartoonbrew.com/animators/spotlight/animators-spotlight-bobe-cannon-239528.html)

- **CARTOON BREW ALSO JUST HONORED WB'S BEN**

WASHAM He worked on several films directed by Chuck Jones. [https://www.cartoonbrew.com/cartoon-study/animators-spotlight-ben-washam-238667.html](https://www.cartoonbrew.com/cartoon-study/animators-spotlight/ben-washam-238667.html)

- **ENJOY A SHORT DELIGHTFUL AND VERY SILLY MOMENT**

WITH AN OCTOPUS <https://www.cartoonbrew.com/shorts/a-deep-dive-into-3d-animation-production-with-ink-directors-joost-van-den-bosch-and-erik-verkerk-239407.html>

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NEW-SURVEY SHOWS JAPANS ANIMATION WORKERS ARE OVERWORKED, UNDERPAID AND FACE REGULAR HARASSMENT There were 323 respondents in the study.

<https://www.cartoonbrew.com/artist-rights/new-survey-shows-japans-animation-workers-are-overworked-underpaid-and-face-regular-harassment-239390.html>

UCLA, SETH MacFARLAND AND MARTIN SCORSESE'S FILM FOUNDATION TEAMED UP TO RESTORE 12

ANIMATED SHORTS A program of nine restorations was shown at the 2024 TCM Classic Film Festival on April 20 with an in-person introduction by MacFarlane. Seven shorts directed by Dave Fleischer were screened: *Koko's Tattoo* (1928), *Little Nobody* (1935), *The Little Stranger* (1936), *Greedy Humpty Dumpty* (1936), *Peeping Penguins* (1937), *The Fresh Vegetable Mystery* (1939), and *So Does An Automobile* (1939). Also shown were *The Three Bears*, a 1939 Terrytoon directed by Mannie Davis, and *Two-Gun Rusty*, a George Pal Puppetoon from 1944.



THIS MAY BE EXCITING NEWS TO SOMEBODY, BUT I NEED A TRANSLATOR TO MAKE SENSE OF IT This is from the *Hollywood Reporter* The headline reads” **“Hollywood Legend Phil Tippett, RKSS’ Anouk Whissell Bring Brand New Projects to Powerful, Rangy Cannes Frontières Selection (EXCLUSIVE)”**

“*Sentinel*, by Hollywood legend Phil Tippett, and Sister Inconnue, the first solo directorial outing of RKSS’ Anouk Whissell, could well be two highlights at a 2024 Cannes Frontières Platform that looks set to underscore the robust range of genre as it is embraced by Hollywood, big independents, horror devotees and auteurs alike.” (I think the word “cold” was a typo for the word could that the paper didn’t catch.)

“Creator of creatures for *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park*, Tippett may have terrified more people than anybody alive. If a teaser is anything to go by, *Sentinel*, a project, may well pick up on the style of 2021’s experimental and nightmarish stop motion/animation *Mad God*.”

“*Sentinel* features a battleground reminiscent of WWI hellish horror, giant bugs echoing *Starship Troopers*, Tippett’s last big job, attack droids and the statuesque figures of Osiris, Horus and Anubis, the last of which saves the hero, the gas-masked Sentinel, from a gruesome battlefield.”

IN THE ‘NY TIMES MAGAZINE’ 4/14/2014, THE ARTICLE

‘LOST ART’ EXPLAINS WHY WARNER BROS. MADE, BUT DIDN’T PLAN TO RELEASE ‘COYOTE VS. ACME’ The article explains the accounting decisions that are being made by Warner/Discovery, Netflix, Amazon, Disney+, Paramount and others who find it make more sense to kill certain projects before they are released and then take a giant loss all at once, instead of releasing a project that doesn’t pay for itself quickly and being stuck with a loss that has to be spread out over a period of years on their taxes. The article states Warners has a “\$45 billion gross debt” so big losses are very attractive to some of their executives. In other words, to hell with art and entertainment, corporate accountants know best.

What effect will having corporations that are too big to fail have on creativity in the arts? We live at a time when large studios depend on sequels, but what will happen if some start to underperform? Will having enormous deficits pressure the studios to focus on safe formula products that hopefully will turn a quick profit? What will happen to risking time and money on a fresh creative products?

NICK PARK WILL PREVIEW A NEW WALLACE AND GROMIT FILM AT ANNECY Nick Park and Merlin Crossingham will offer stop-motion fans a sneak peek at their untitled feature. In it Wallace designs a “smart gnome” for the family garden. Apparently it begins to develop a mind of its own. As events spiral out of control, it is up to Wallace’s faithful dog Gromit to put things right. Park and Crossingham co-directed the film, based on a story by Park and a screenplay from *Shaun the Sheep* and *Gnomeo & Juliet* writer Mark Burton.

Netflix will additionally offer previews of *Ultraman: Rising* and Skydance Animation’s musical adventure *Spellbound* (streaming this year). Also at Annecy, Dreanworks will preview *Wild Robot*. It opens Sept. 27. *Wild Robot*, from director Chris Sanders, follows the journey of a robot that is shipwrecked on an uninhabited island and must learn to adapt to the harsh surroundings.

RICHARD WILLIAMS

ADVENTURES IN ANIMATION

HOW I LEARNED
WHO I LEARNED FROM
AND WHAT I DID WITH IT



COMING SOON TO BOOK STORES, A NEW BOOK BY RICHARD WILLIAMS AND HIS WIFE IMOGEN SUTTON

Richard Williams' Adventures in Animation : How I learned, Who I learned from and What I did with it comes out in the UK August 29, 2024 and will be in stores in the U.S. next spring. You may be able to buy it from Amazon or another dealer in the UK. They are taking advanced orders.

Advance publicity says, “Triple-Oscar-winning, world-renowned animator - and author of the seminal book *The Animator's Survival Kit* - Richard Williams' legendary career in the world of animation is brought to the page here for the first time.

Written with his wife and collaborator, Imogen Sutton, *Adventures in Animation* follows the life and career of this pivotal figure in animated features, from the influential moment when, aged five, Williams saw *Snow White*, right through his career of more than sixty years. Over those decades, Williams created full-length features, short films, title sequences for films and hundreds of commercials - all

of which were graced by his characteristically elegant, sinuous lines and magnificent imagination. Williams' place in animation history is assured: he directed the Academy Award-winning 1971 adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* and perhaps most famously worked as Director of Animation on *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, for which he won two Academy Awards. Serving as the linkman between the original creators of the world of Disney (*Snow White*, *Dumbo*, *The Jungle Book*) and the current generation of digital animators (*Toy Story*, *The Incredibles* and *Ice Age*), it is fair to say that his like will not be seen again.

Williams' first book, *The Animator's Survival Kit*, and the masterclasses he ran, saw him pass on his hard-won craft to future generations of animators. In *Adventures in Animation*, the story of the man behind the images will inspire them all over again, bringing more animators and fans of animation to the life and work of this master of the artform.”

DISNEY’S “EXPERIENCE DIVISION” MAY REMAIN THEIR BIGGEST CASH COW IN THE FUTURE Disney plans to invest \$60 billion over 10 years into its “experiences division,” which includes the theme parks, resorts and cruise line, as well as merchandise. They are very competitive in many sectors (movies, Broadway shows, etc.), but they have been way ahead of their competition in theme parks (ever since Disneyland opened). According to a recent filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission about 70% of Disney’s operating income comes from that division. By contrast, Disney’s sports sector, including ESPN, contributed 19% of operating income. The entertainment division, consisting of the company’s TV channels, streaming services and movie studios, brought up the rear at 11%.



Monstra Grows Tentacles

MONSTRA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

2024 7 to 17 March 2024

The 23rd Monstra Festival of Animation in Lisbon, reached out its tentacles to show films at six different cinemas throughout the city for eleven days

By Nancy Denney Phelps

This year, the 23rd Monstra Festival of Animation in Lisbon, reached out its tentacles to show films at six different cinemas throughout the city for eleven days. Along with a full program every day at the historic Cinema Sao Jorge, there was one also at Cinema City Alvalde. This cinema advertises itself as not a conventional theatre. It says that it wants to appeal to all of your senses and emotions. I didn't get to that cinema this year but they have me curious and on my next visit to Monstra I plan to explore that cinema.

More conventional settings were the Cinema Fernando Lopes situated inside the Universidade Lusofona, The Muse National De Etnologia, and AMAS (Auditorio Municipal Antonio Silva).

Whenever I am in Lisbon, I visit the Cinemateca Portuguesa. This year I was happy to see that the festival screened films and presented a masterclass there. Founded in 1948, the Cinemateca has grown to

include two lovely screening rooms that show vintage Portuguese and International films. It also contains a library and photographic archive, as well as an equipment museum featuring projection objects from the 17th century down to the present. In 2010 work was completed on the construction of five new vaults to safely archive old film. The Linha de Sombra bookstore offers a wide selection of books, magazines, DVDs, and postcards.

All of this would be enough to delight any cinephile, but there is also a lovely restaurant where you can enjoy delicious meals, good beer, and wine at a reasonable price. The restaurant also has outdoor rooftop dining. Even if you are not a film buff, which I can't imagine, it is a lovely place to dine.

2024 marks the 50th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, so it was fitting that the theme for this year's festival was "Freedom of Expression". For those of you not up on your Portuguese history, the Carnation Revolution was a military coup by left-leaning military officers that overthrew the authoritarian Estado Novo government on 25 April 1974 in Lisbon. It resulted in major social, economic, and political changes in Portugal and its overseas colonies. It was a peaceful revolution resulting in the Portuguese transition to democracy and the end of the Portuguese Colonial War in Angola. The Carnation Revolution got its name from the fact that almost no shots were fired and the people offered carnations to the soldiers when they took to the streets to celebrate the end of the dictatorship.

As part of the opening tribute to the historic event, four films were screened on the theme of revolution. My favorite one was *The Revolution*. The five-minute film is a collective work by animation school students from Portugal, Italy, Germany, Bulgaria, and Turkey. In the film the students, who are too young to remember revolutions in their countries, discuss what revolution means to them.

This year the festival guest country was Ireland. Tomm Moore of Cartoon Saloon created a beautiful poster and trailer that embodied the spirit of Ireland and animation. There were plenty of fish, octopus tentacles, and fishermen all lorded over by a large woman with wild red hair and tentacles for feet. She looked like a wilder grown-up version of the young girl from *Wolfwalkers*. Even the festival awards featured

octopus tentacles.

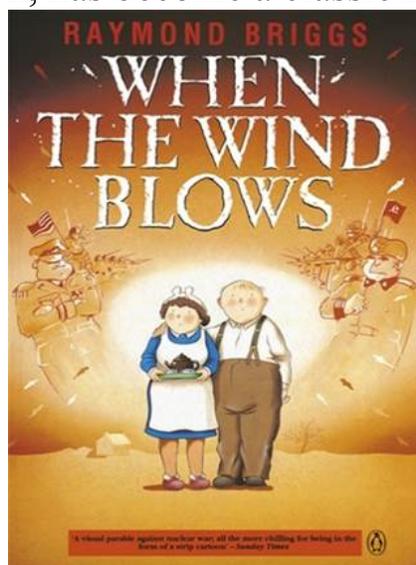


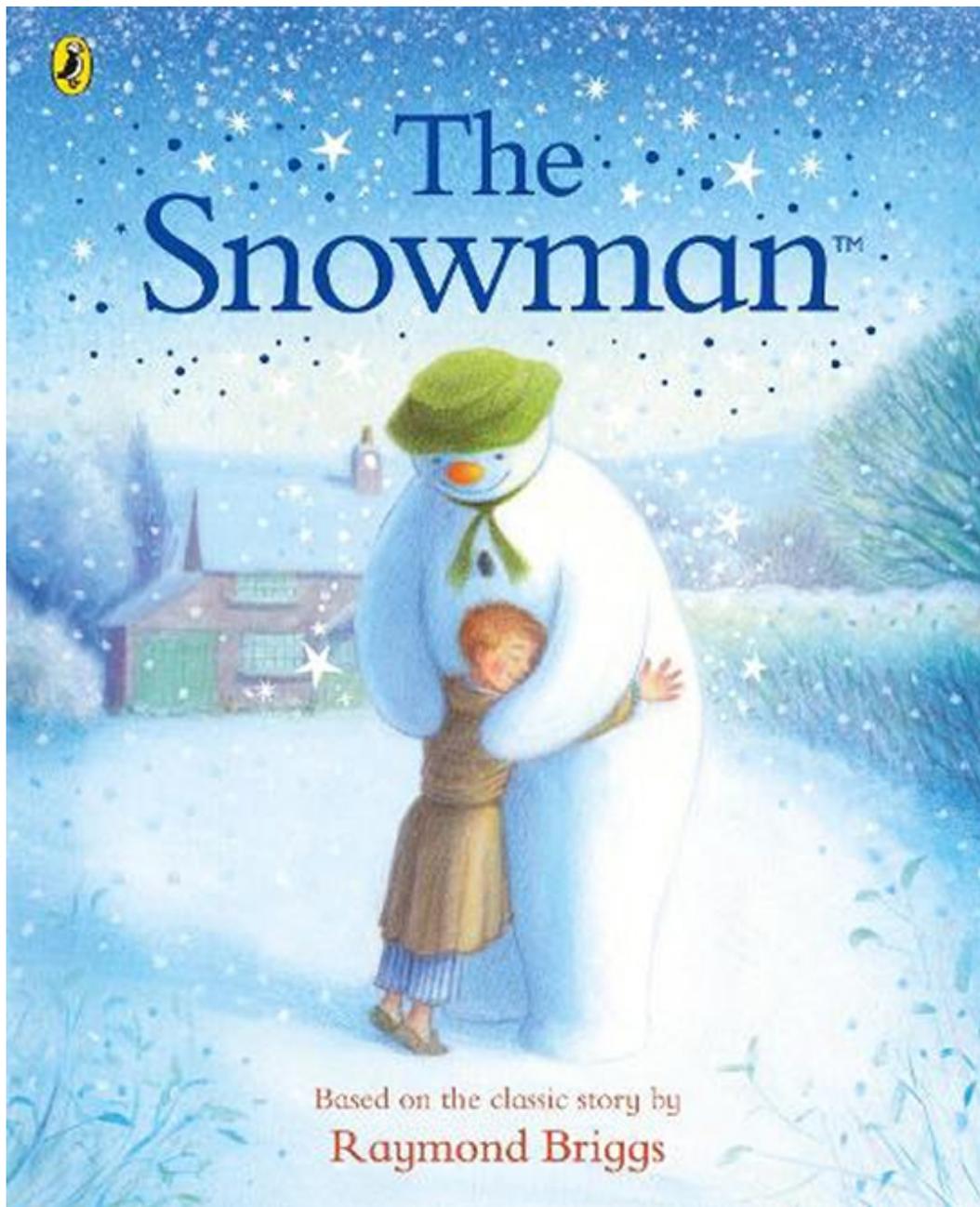
Festival Awards

Ireland is currently a powerhouse on the animation scene, but it wasn't always that way. Pioneers like James Horgan in the early 20th century and Aidan Hickey in the 1970s created children's series and festival films such as Hickey's 1987 *An Inside Job* about a trip to the dentist, but that can hardly be considered an animation boom.

In 1979 American Don Bluth set up his studio in Ireland. At the time it was the largest animation studio in Western Europe. Monstra screened two of Bluth and his team's successful feature films, *The Land Before Time* and *All Dogs Go To Heaven*.

It wasn't until Jimmy Murakami and Fred Wolf founded Murakami-Wolf Studio in Dublin that Irish animation began to be noticed. Jimmy was born on the West Coast of California and as a boy, he was interred with the rest of his family in a Japanese internment camp. As a producer, director, and animator he produced two films that are still very loved today. The 1982 film, *The Snowman*, based on Raymond Briggs's beautiful children's book, has become a classic film.





The powerful 1986 anti-war film *When the Wind Blows*, also based on a Raymond Briggs graphic novel, is still devastating to watch. In the film, an ordinary couple prepares to face a nuclear attack using a British government-issued pamphlet with all of the wrong information to safeguard their home. The festival screened both of these famous films and Jimmy's personal short films were also shown in a special tribute program to him.

Cartoon Saloon was founded in Kilkenny in 1999 by Nora Twomey (*Breadwinner*) and Tomm Moore. Its first four films, *The Secret of*

Kells, *Song of the Sea*, *Breadwinner*, and *Wolfwalkers*, have all been nominated for the Best Animated Feature Film Oscar.

Along with screenings of Cartoon Saloon's four feature films, a retrospective of their short films was shown. Tomm Moore was also a guest at the festival and gave a masterclass "From Sketch Book to Screen".

In 2024 Cartoon Saloon is celebrating its 25th Anniversary and I send my congratulations to all of the studio. I am sure that there will be numerous celebrations throughout the year.

I had been looking forward to seeing Spanish animator Isabel Herguera's new feature film *Sultana's Dream*, but I couldn't have begun to imagine what an impact the lavish visuals and the rich, full depth of the story would have on me.

The film is loosely based on and inspired by the 1905 Bengali Utopian story *Sultana's Dream*. The book was written by Begum Rokeya, also known as Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a Muslim feminist, writer, and social reformer from Bengal.

The film opens in present-day times where we are introduced to Ines, a young Spanish artist. She is recalling her first experience of fear. "I remember it like it was yesterday. I was eleven years old. My father had not yet arrived to pick me up and the shadows of the night fell over the park. Some distance away, a man was watching me closely. I felt his cold, calculating gaze and my heart stopped. (. . .) It was the first time I experienced fear as a woman."

Ines travels to India to end a relationship with her Indian lover. While there, in a bookstore, by chance, she discovers Rokeya Hossain's story about a Utopian country, Ladyland, ruled by women, a world governed by intelligence and not force. "It is men who pose a danger to women, not the other way around, so why should we lock women away", asks Hossain.

As rich as the story is, the artwork is just as fascinating as the story. Ines' journey is in 2D watercolor taken from Herguera's travel notebooks. Cut-out animation is used to recreate Begum Rokeya Hossain's life, and for Ladyland, Mehndi (temporary henna tattoo) was employed once a way to animate with it was discovered.

I hope that *Sultana's Dream* gets wide distribution; it is a film that deserves to be seen by the entire family followed by a discussion about

women's place in the world, and particularly our safety.

In the last twenty years Portuguese animation has burst upon the world animation stage. For many years Portuguese animators told stories about their native poets, writers, and everyday family life which did not necessarily transfer to the rest of the world.

This all began to change in the early 2000s when animated films such as José Miguel Ribario's *The Suspect* captured the hearts of audiences throughout the world. The 24-minute puppet animation is suspenseful but has its humorous moments as a "train killer" is on the loose and a young traveler begins to suspect that the murderer is one of the three occupants of his cabinet. But are his suspicions correct?



The Suspect

In 2022 Jose Miguel made his feature film directing debut with *Nayola*. The story of three generations of women caught up in the 25-year civil war in Angola is a story everyone can relate to.

The dynamic husband and wife team of Regina Pessoa and Abi Feijo have made their mark on the world animation scene with such films as Abi's 2000 *Clandestino (Stowaway)*. Regina's *A Noté (The Night)* in 1999 brought her to the attention of the animation world and *Uncle*

Thomas, Accounting For The Days (2019) has proven that she is a voice to be reckoned with on the world animation stage. Regina was selected to create the 2024 Annecy Catalogue Cover. In 2015 she also created the Annecy Catalogue Cover, making her one of just a few people to have ever been invited to do it twice.

In 2018 the collective studio BAP burst upon the scene and can now credit many strong films to their roster along with numerous awards. Founders David Doutel and Vasco Sa create beautiful painterly films that are Portuguese stories but with universal interests. Their 2014 film *Fuligem (Soot)* about the closing of small-town railroad stations and *Garrano (2022)* about the threat of forest fires are both stories we can all relate to.

In 2023 BAP collective member Laura Gonçalves made the short-list for the Oscars with her lovely film *The Garbage Man*. The film pays poignant homage to her uncle who immigrated to France and became a garbage man. On his trips home to his small Portuguese village, he would bring presents: bicycles, washing machines, musical instruments, wigs, dentures, lamps, watches, toys, whatever no one wanted he would repair and give a new life in his village. The voice-over of the family telling stories about Uncle Manuel can't help but make you smile as you listen to it.

If all this is not proof enough that Portuguese animation is here to stay, in 2023 Joao Gonzalez's *Ice Merchants* became the first Portuguese film to be nominated in the Best Short Animated Film category for the Academy Award. The film about family love, loss and so much more was also the first Portuguese animation to be awarded at the Cannes Film Festival.

It didn't surprise me that my favorite short film program at this year's festival was the Vasco Granja Competition for Portuguese films. There was not a weak film among the eleven in the program.

We have always gone on family holidays that don't quite turn out as we expected. *Pascoa (Easter)* by André Ruivo brought back memories of my own past family holidays and made me smile. The author says that the film is an autobiographical documentary about an Easter vacation spent by the Ruivo family in the country village of Castelo de Vide where the resurrection of Christ is traditionally celebrated with a famous "night rattle" on Easter Sunday Eve. The horns and procession

marching around the village are joined by local citizens banging on cow bells. The holiday sounds harmless. What could possibly go wrong? The delightful slice-of-life film earned André Ruivo a Special Mention at Monstra.

Marta Monteiro tackled spousal abuse with a new twist in *Cold Soup*. Instead of staying and enduring an abusive husband or blindly running, the faceless woman in Marta's film finds a way out at last that is logical and sensible, even if it does take a while.

For years the woman lived isolated and chained to a loveless marriage, only staying because of her three children, her financial dependence upon her husband, and the indifference and conservative attitudes of people who ignored and devalued outbursts and desperate cries for help by women in her position.

When her last child left home, she conceived a plan to escape. Saving bits of money at a time from the household allowance, she was able to rent an apartment. With the help of her younger son, she began to remove things from the apartment a few at a time; all the while her oblivious husband didn't notice anything missing. When she was finally ready to leave for good, all she left her husband was a bowl of cold soup in the refrigerator.

The film is a moving, well-told story that obviously spoke to the audience because they honored it with the Audience Award. *Cold Soup* also was selected by the jury as the Best Portuguese Short Film along with the Special Jury Award of the HBO Max.

The SPA-Vasco Granja Award given to the Best Portuguese Short Film went to Dimitri Mihajlovic and Miguel Lima of BAP Studio for their film *Almost Forgotten*. In the year of the 50th Anniversary of the Carnation Revolution, this beautiful 2D and painterly film is about the fragility of memory and how easy it is to forget. As a woman wonders through the impermanence of her childhood memories, she tries to reconstruct the history of the house where her grandfather lived. The film is lush and rich, reminding me of the Andrew Wyeth painting *Christina's World* where a young woman is seated on the ground in a field gazing at the family home in the distance. *Almost Forgotten* is also disturbing and unsettling. As I write this it is a week after I saw the film and I am still thinking about it.

Monstra does not forget about the youngest moviegoers. Monstrinha,

the arm of the festival designed for younger viewers and their families, presented Monstrinha Baby. The 39-minute program featured 10 very short films for the preschool set. Family programs for various age groups continued in the mornings and afternoons at the main cinema and at cinemas around town.



Monstrinha is not just a once-a-year event. Over 20 years ago when Monstra began, one of its goals was to bring excellent, original animation from around the world to children in every corner of Portugal. Monstrinha now travels through Portugal year-round. Along with workshops, it offers four different film programs designed especially for preschool children (3 to 5-year-olds), Primary Schoolers (6 to 9-year-olds), and Secondary school-aged pupils from 10 to 14 years of age. There is also a special Generation M screening curated for students 15 to 17 years old.

festival or a retrospective of historically important films.

This year's beautifully mounted exhibition titled *Three Families* brings together original sets and characters from films about three distinctly different families from three different European countries.



No Dogs or Italians Allowed

As you enter the museum gallery, there are French animator Alain Ughetto's beautifully crafted sets for *No Dogs or Italians Allowed*. The feature film is based on the true story of the director's family who left Ughettera, Italy to escape Italian persecution during World War II, the rise of fascism, and the Spanish flu epidemic as well as the lack of work.

The tight-knit community of Italians suffers racism as they attempt to cross the Alps and flee poverty in Italy in search of a better life and work in France. Ughetto has said "What interested me in this film was to show people at work, people who have built our infrastructure in France: tunnels, roads, bridges, dams, people who without hiding remain totally invisible. (. . .) this story begins with 'I' and very quickly becomes 'we'. Whether we are Polish, Spanish, Portuguese, Indian, Vietnamese or

North African, the past is in our DNA”.



With Each Passing Day

With Each Passing Day is a Portuguese short film currently in production. Directed by Emanuel Nevado, it tells the story of an elderly mouse, Mrs. Piedade, who lives in a small mountain village in the interior of Portugal. Her existence is mainly a lonely and a rigid routine, but every day she packs an afternoon tea and meets her two friends, sisters, who live in the same village. Mrs. Piedade has a great longing to break her routine and return to a time and place where she was happy long ago. But, ... she is afraid to go alone. Will she be able to persuade the two sisters to come with her? I guess we will just have to wait until the film is completed to find out.

In all of the years that I have been visiting the Monstra exhibition at the Museum, I have never seen anything as large and complexly constructed as the set for *Each Passing Day*. The entire back wall of the puppet museum has been transformed into the exterior of Mrs. Piedade's home, constructed out of intricately laid stones. Right in front of the life-

sized house is tiny Mrs. Piedade herself. It is quite a remarkable achievement and must have taken quite a while to construct.

Emanuel Nevado honed his craft first at the Aardman Academy and then worked at Aardman Animation as well as in Portugal for the past seven years. I am looking forward to seeing *With Each Passing Day*. From what I saw of the characters and sets, it is going to be a treat.



Quiet Sunday Lunch Set for the Family

The final display is *The Family Portrait* from Croatian animator Lea Vidakovic. The multi-award winning 15-minute film depicts a quiet Sunday afternoon in an aristocratic family home just before the First World War. Andras and his daughter Zsofia are caught by surprise when Andras' brother pays a sudden unexpected visit with the twelve members of his family. The "guests" proceed to wreak havoc upon the peaceful family home as the children break everything they can get their hands on and terrorize the family dog. The adults have no better manners. As quickly as they had arrived, they are gone again, leaving Andras and the family maid to try to put the house back together.



The Remains of the Day After a Family Visit

I have been following Lea's work since I first met her in 2012. At that time, she was working on her film *Sisters*. I was amazed then at the care and attention that she took with even the smallest detail in her film and she has only gotten more meticulous over the years.



The Beautifully Intricate Salon

The exhibition of the figures and sets for *The Family Portrait* takes Lea's work to a new level. I could have spent hours looking at the tiny details in the sets down to the crumbs on the dessert plates in the dining room to the intricate plants and furnishings in the living room. The story

is strong and the film is beautifully animated and the sets are amazing.

The Family Portrait is about a uniquely dysfunctional family, proving Leo Tolstoy's adage that "All happy families are alike, each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way".

The *Three Families Exhibition* opened on the 16th of February and will run until the 7th of April. If you are in Lisbon or plan to be there soon be sure to not miss the *Three Families* Exhibition. The museum is also worth a special visit to the permanent collection which contains one of the most significant and complete collections of Portuguese traditional puppets as well as a diverse collection of African and Southeast Asian and Brazilian puppets and masks.

Lisbon is a beautiful city to visit. There are fabulous restaurants featuring not only the best of Portuguese cuisine but a vast array of international foods as well. Anyone who has ever tasted a pastel de nata, a Lisbon-originated custard tart with rich egg custard nestled in a flaky golden brown puff pastry, falls in love with this wonderful pastry at the first mouthful.

Portugal is known for its fishermen and tales of the sea. All sorts of mouth-watering seafood abound, both in the markets and in restaurants. The small neighborhood restaurants that serve noon-day specials should not be overlooked either. You can discover mouth-watering home-style cooking at its best for very reasonable prices.

Once your stomach is full, there is much to discover in the city. One sight not to miss is the 25th of April bridge. The bridge is the oldest bridge across the Tagus River in Lisbon. The Tagus originates in Western Spain near the Portuguese border and flows across central Portugal before emptying into the Atlantic Ocean just west of Lisbon.



25th of April Bridge

Opened in 1966, the bridge was originally named Ponte Salazar after the Portuguese dictator Antonio de Oliveria Salazar. Following the peaceful Carnation Revolution, the bridge was renamed Ponte 25th of April. The bridge has many similarities to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Both are suspension bridges and both are also painted International Orange which is an unusual color for a bridge. A fun fact is that both bridges have been in James Bond films. The April 25th Bridge was in the 1969 *On Her Majesty's Secret Service* and the Golden Gate Bridge can be seen in the 1985 film *A View To Kill*.

After you have had a drink and enjoyed the view of the Pont 25th April and the harbor, head over to the nearby Torre de Belém (Belém Tower). Built in the 16th century in the Tagus River, it controlled the entrance to the city from the sea. The location for the fortified tower was chosen because it was the starting point for many Portuguese explorations during the Golden Age of Discoveries. The tower is also known as Torre de Sao Vicente (Tower of Saint Vincent) in honor of Saint Vincent, Lisbon's patron saint.



Belem Tower

The tower was originally surrounded by water, but over the centuries the Tagus River has receded and a section has silted up. The tower is now easily accessible from the shore via a raised walkway to the entrance. The UNESCO World Heritage site has five floors which lead to a roof terrace. There is also an armory and the royal residences on the second floor as well as official diplomatic chambers. The magnificent interior and furnishing of the tower make it well worth a visit.

Lisbon has seven hills just like San Francisco and cable cars too. The first cable car line opened in 1901 and whether you just want to get from one place to another or just see the historic city, the cable car is a good way to travel. Lisbon is a wonderful walking city; no matter what direction you head off in you will discover a unique neighborhood, a beautiful park, or a lovely place to just sit and watch the world go by.



Humphrey welcoming Nancy to the Hotel Florida Chinatown poster was over our bed
Guests of Monstra Festival stay at the lovely Hotel Florida, conveniently located next to the Cinema Sao Jorge and downtown Lisbon. It is the perfect place for any cinephile. The first thing that you notice when either of the two elevators opens is that you are greeted by a life-sized photo of Audrey Hepburn or Humphrey Bogart. Each room is named after a famous actor or director and once you enter your room there are two original movie posters on the wall. This year we were in the Jack Nicholson room and posters from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Chinatown* looked over us as we slept.

In previous years we have been the in De Nero room with Travis Bickle looking down at us, the Martin Scorsese room, and my personal favorite the Steve McQueen room where I woke up every morning to Steve on his motorcycle preparing to jump a barbed wire fence. I can't remember all the different rooms we have stayed in over the years. Even if you are not a cinephile I highly recommend the Hotel Florida. The upstairs breakfast room has a beautiful view of the Marques de Pombal statue in the roundabout outside the windows and the inviting Eduardo VII Park is just minutes away.



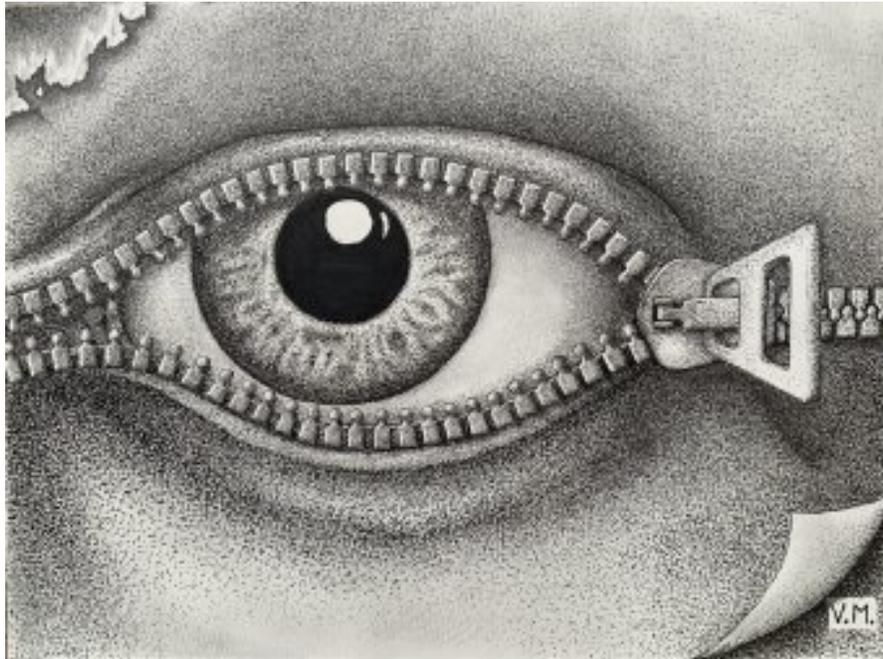
After years of staying at the Hotel Florida, this year we discovered that they also have a restaurant which is located down a passageway next door to the hotel, through a mostly deserted shopping center and up a staircase to the first floor. The Great American Disaster, that really is its name, is a burger restaurant with a great rock 'n' roll feel to it. Resplendent in pink, turquoise, and chrome, they have many items on their menu, including super-looking shakes, but old-fashioned burgers are their specialty. Their prices are reasonable, the food delicious, and the atmosphere fun. After years of staying at the Florida Hotel, we finally discovered something that the locals seem to have known all along because the restaurant was always full every time we went there this year.

A big thank you goes out to Festiva Director Fernando Galrito for inviting us to once again be part of Monstra. He puts together excellent programs and is also the perfect host. I also must thank the festival staff, especially Ines Barroso of the production staff who helped me in every way. A very special thank you with a big hug goes to Emanuela Chinelli for so many things above and beyond the call of duty; I will never forget her great makeup skills. And a very special thank you also goes to Victor Carrico of the Lisbon Tourist office for inviting me to visit his beautiful city.

Next year for the 25th Anniversary edition of the festival Austria will be the spotlighted country.
Mark your Callender to save 20 to 30 March 2025 for the next edition of Monstra

You can learn more about this year's festival at: <http://monstrafestival.com>

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READ A BLOG THAT CAN HELP MOTIVATE YOU TO BE MORE CREATIVE

Animator and Cañada College animation professor Paul Naas is writing a weekly Substack column entitled "**Just Start Creating!**" Paul's column is about creativity in all its forms, with the goal of encouraging and inspiring readers to start or expand their creative pursuits. He also talks about potential pitfalls on a creative journey and provides tips on overcoming them.

His Substack column is a great read for anyone who wants to start a new creative pursuit or has become "stuck" in something they're currently doing. It's also great information for students taking classes in the creative arts.

Paul's column publishes every Friday, and can be found at:
<https://paulnaas.substack.com/>

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Top of Form
Bottom of Form



‘DOLLHOUSE: THE MOVIE’ OPENS ON SEPTEMBER 26, 2025 This is the third feature film that DreamWorks will release in 2025, joining the previously-announced *Dog Man* (slated for January 31, 2025) and *The Bad Guys 2* (August 1, 2025). Per Nielsen’s *Gabby’s Dollhouse* was the sixth-most-viewed original streaming series in 2023.

ASIFA-SF IS A VOLUNTEER RUN ASSOCIATION

Newsletter Editor: Karl Cohen

Contributors include Nancy Denney-Phelps, Paul Naas, Jim Middleton and other friends of ASIFA

Special thanks to Tsvika Oren from Tel Aviv for his help in researching the article on the Holocaust

Proofreaders Jim Middleton, Scott Kravitz and Paul Naas

Special thanks to Nancy Denney-Phelps who represents our chapter on the international ASIFA board. Emily Berk is our webmaster, and Eihway Su keeps our email list and does a dozen other things.

ASIFA-SF is a chapter of Association Internationale du Film d’Animation with over 40 chapters around the world. Now that we are supposedly post-Covid we had hopes for a rebound with live events once more, but that isn’t happening yet.

**TO KEEP OUR CHAPTER ALIVE WE NEED TO FIND
VOLUNTEERS TO DEVELOP LIVE AND/OR ONLINE
PROGRAMS
UNTIL THAT HAPENS WE ARE OFFERING**

**FREE MEMBERSHIPS
NEW MEMBERS WANTED, TELL OTHERS TO SIGN UP TO
GET FREE ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER
AND WHATEVER SCREENINGS THAT ASIFA-SF MEMBERS GET
INVITED TO.**

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